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ABSTRACT

A plan to de-escalate fighting behaviors at an inner-city elementary school was implemented. It is believed that factors contributing to the problem were: low socio-economic status; a lack of parental supervision at home; a lack of parental involvement at school; a high level of criminal activity surrounding the schools; overcrowded class areas; and an absence of structured behavior change program. The program was designed to decrease fighting behaviors exhibited among intermediate grade (3-5) elementary students. Solution strategies to resolve fighting in the intermediate grades were: institute a 12-week project focusing on 10 behavior change designs relating to communication skills among students, teach ways to escape a confrontation, and provide a working knowledge of body language. Objectives for the program were for 80% of the teachers and the students to increase their knowledge of how to de-escalate a fight, and to reduce fighting referrals by 50%. Evaluation instruments used to measure this project were teacher-made tests and recorded baseline data. It is believed that school culture can become more positive when the de-escalating skills which are taught relate specifically to the actual behaviors exhibited. Total effectiveness of the program showed that violent behavior such as fighting can be reduced with a comprehensive structured program that meets student needs. Appendixes contain the teacher and student survey instruments, baseline data, teacher and student survey results, parent newsletter, and teacher in-service agendas. (JBJ)

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A BEHAVIOR CHANGE PROGRAM TO DE-ESCALATE FIGHTING IN INTERMEDIATE GRADES OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

Vincent L. Sthair

A Final Report submitted to the Faculty of the Fischler
Center for the Advancement of Education at Nova
Southeastern University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of Educational Specialist

The abstract of this report may be placed in the
University database system for reference.

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ABSTRACT

A Behavior Change Program to De-escalate Fighting in Intermediate Grades of an Elementary School.

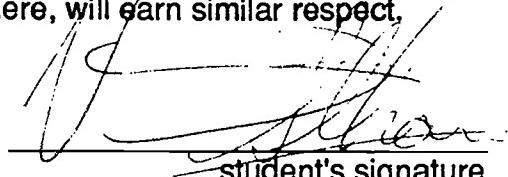
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This practicum design was used to implement a plan to de-escalate fighting behaviors at an inner-city elementary school. The writer believes that the problem was caused by a result of the following factors individually and or collectively as a whole. These factors were low socio-economic status, a lack of parental supervision at the home, a lack of parental involvement within the child's school environment, a school boundary surrounded by a high level of criminal activity, over crowding and close quarter-type class areas, and no structured behavior change program to de-escalate fighting. The program was planned to decrease the fighting behaviors that are exhibited among the intermediate grade (3-5) elementary students. The solution strategies to resolve fighting in the intermediate grades were to institute a twelve week implementation project specifically focusing on ten behavior change designs specially relating to communication skills between students, ways to escape a confrontation that could potentially accelerate into a fight , and working knowledge of body language that will diagnose what the other person is feeling. The objectives for the program were for 80% percent of the teachers' and students' to increase their knowledge how to de-escalate a fight; and to reduce fighting referrals by 50%. The target group teachers' and the fighting referral rate objectives were met. The target group students' objective was not met. The evaluation instruments used to measure this project are teacher-made tests and recorded baseline data. In conclusion, the author believes the school culture can become more positive when de-escalating skills are taught specifically relating to the actual behaviors that are exhibited at the practicum site. In summary, the total effectiveness of the program showed that violent behavior such as fighting in intermediate grades of an elementary school can be reduced with a comprehensive structured program that meets the needs of the students at the respective school.

Authorship Statement

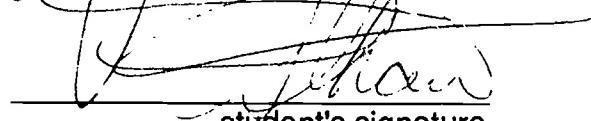
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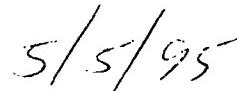
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CHAPTER I

Purpose

The target school was located in the Southeastern United States. The educational institution was a public elementary school located in the North Central part of a metropolitan city. The school is located in a predominately African American community. The dwellings within the school boundaries were apartments and single family homes. The school was a traditional elementary school configuration of grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The classrooms were self-contained. The population of the school was 1250 students. The school was divided into two campuses. One was a "portable site" made up of thirty portable buildings located one mile away from the main campus. The site where the practicum takes place was a historical site. The population at the historical site was 630 students. The school was categorized as a neighborhood school. There was no transportation provided to or from the school site. The school was considered a community school where it was open to the public, and access was provided in the evening and weekends for school (parent education training) and non-school related activities (church).

The total population of the school faculty and staff equals fifty-five adults. There were five staff members who have worked over twenty-five years at the school. The school faculty at the target location was

composed of one principal, one assistant principal, one guidance counselor, three related arts teachers, one Dropout Prevention Teacher, one SLD teacher, one ESE Specialist, thirty classroom teachers, and thirteen paraprofessionals. The two morning custodial staff members interact with the students offering work-related details and instruction for behavior incentive purposes.

The school has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The District and / or Federal programs offered at the school were Alliance for Quality Schools (AQS). This program was designed to help serve students who were deficient in reading by providing materials and instruction for direct instructional reading. Furthermore, the school was an ESOL center and receives Chapter One funding. Also, the schools was a Shared Decision Making school. Ninety-six percent of the student body was on free or reduced lunch programs. There was an after school day care program provided in the neighboring park for the students.

The socio-economic stratification of the school was lower to lower-middle class. Ninety percent of the student population was Black, four percent was Hispanic, four percent was White, and two percent was Other. The school was made up of sixty five percent Haitian families. The school location was in a transitory community where influxes of Haitians arrive into the United States and relocate within the target school boundaries. Family information, obtained through a survey of school

parents show many are English language deficient, and some of these students translate for their parents in verbal and written communication for correspondence. Half of the parents don't understand the work their children bring home; therefore, they don't get involved in their course work. Approximately eighty percent of the students were left at home with someone other than a parent supervising them. A majority of the parents say children should be paddled if they misbehave. The reason the parents stated this is that it builds character. Few parents can take time off to visit their children's teacher because of there work schedule. Seventy-five percent of the parents were employed and fifty to seventy percent have two or three jobs. Sixty percent were single parents. Seventy percent of the parent say they discipline their children; or whoever was in charge of their child at the time should do it.

The target school's local police department provided current data (Fort Lauderdale Police Department, 1994) regarding criminal acts occurring within the target school's boundary (approximately two miles square) shows that crime was active and on the rise (Table 1).

Table 1
 Fort Lauderdale Police Department
 Offense Activity: 9-01-92 through 8-31-93
 Offense Activity: 9-01-93 through 8-31-94

<u>Zone numbers of school boundary:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>9/01 - 8/31</u>	<u>9/01 - 8/31</u>
	<u>Criminal Acts:</u>	<u>'92 - '93</u>	<u>'93 - '94</u>
207	Assault		
208	Battery		
212	Drug related		
213	Domestic violence		
	Totals:	528	533

The type of crime surveyed related to the target school were assaults, battery, drug related, and domestic violence.

The school district in which the target elementary school was located, provided its local schools, in the county a survey to list the student and parent responses to questions of importance. Question number twenty- seven asks, do many students misbehave at the school. Question number twenty-nine asks, do I feel safe from crime at the school. The answers to these questions are shown below (Table 2).

Table 2
Comparison of 1992-1993 year
School Survey of Students
Grades 3 - 5

Question # 27	Results:	81.02 %	Voted:	Yes
		18.98 %	Voted:	No
Question # 29	Results:	53.42 %	Voted:	Yes
		46.58 %	Voted:	No

The targeted schools test population were grades three through five and their parents.

The parents survey shows a dissatisfaction with safety at the target school site (Table 3).

Table 3
 Comparison of 1991-1992 and
 1992 - 1993 Parent Survey

<u>1991-1992 Year</u>				
Question # 29	Results:	53.4 %	Voted:	Yes
		20.7 %	Voted:	Somewhat
		25.9 %	Voted:	No
<u>1992 - 1993 Year</u>				
Question #29	Results:	16.0 %	Voted:	Yes
		08.0 %	Voted:	Somewhat
		76.0 %	Voted:	No

The result was approximately fifty percent less than the previous year. When accompanying this increase of selected criminal acts in the target school boundary reported by the police, and the high rate of vandalism and physical attacks that lead to injury reported by the schools First Report of Injury (FRI) report, shows that parents of the target population were influenced to an extent by these issues of safety.

During the 1993 -1994 school year FRI Reports, the target

school had numerous reports filed to its school district office regarding acts of a criminal nature that occurred on the target schools property. These acts were filed as first report of incident (FRI). The target schools FRI reports for 1993-1994 school year consist of twenty fights that resulted in injury (not including fighting that does not result in injury), two incidence of weapons usage, scratching, pinching, and fifteen acts of vandalism. In summary, the estimated cost of vandalism that the target school incurred is approximately five to seven thousand dollars in materials and labor.

The school was in contract with its city recreation department for rental of there park facilities for the schools physical education curriculum classes. However, the park playground facilities have been condemned by the school districts risk management department for being unsafe. The play ground equipment has been declared off-limits for approximately three years without it being repaired or replaced by the city. Furthermore, the school's administration required that no recess was to be scheduled out on the playground. Additional considerations, include small over-crowded classrooms, congested hallways, and close quarters within the cafeteria.

The writer was a full-time Physical Education Teacher with six years of teaching experience; an adjunct professor of physical education at a community college, and an adult educator teacher at a community school. Additional responsibilities of the writer includes participation with the SACS Steering committee, Chairman of the Schools Finance

committee, membership in the schools Technology committee, former Team Leader, Credit Union Ambassador, and School Improvement Team member. Furthermore, the writer fulfilled the roles of implementor and facilitator of the practicum. The duties included taking charge and responsibility of all record keeping, discipline, scheduling of in service meetings, and being available for parent conferences.

The target school does not have a designed curriculum of instruction regarding the use of a behavior change program to reduce fighting within the school. Since, the writer was a related arts teacher at the target site, and was scheduled to see all of the school's classes once a week and even more. It is evidenced by subjective observation that a program of this nature needs to be introduced to have a degree of control over the problem.

Problem Statement

Currently, violence within the public school system is on the rise. Local school boards are deciding whether to install walk metal detectors, police resources officers, random searches, or all three if necessary. Some administrators or teachers do carry weapons on their person for protection. This action if caught will be grounds for prosecution and termination. Elementary schools are not any more exempt from violent behavior or criminal acts. In some states children as young as eleven years old are being tried as adults for cases of murder and rape.

As citizens of the world, students need to be knowledgeable of how their actions have consequences. Students need to be critical thinkers whose knowledge and experience will prepare them to become a functioning, productive, and law abiding member of society. Furthermore, they need to be knowledgeable in understanding how people relate or react when various forms of anticipation, frustration, or fear are felt and exhibited. Consequently, when negative behaviors are demonstrated, appropriate coping behaviors need to be shown.

Inside individual classrooms, when negative behaviors such as fighting erupts, it takes approximately ten minutes for the students to return to their on-task assignment (Greenberg, 1994). Classroom teacher's behavior change strategies are usually posted within the respective rooms. Hopefully, if the educator was consistent, these rules will be reviewed. However, exposure to a curriculum designed to de-escalate fighting goes well beyond the scope of posting rules on a classroom wall.

The writer contends that a student in an elementary school needs to have sufficient knowledge of avoiding negative and fighting behavior. However, the writer's experience corresponds to the target schools description of an inadequate preparation or knowledge base for associating these negative and fighting behaviors as being acceptable in solving relational conflict.

The key to overcome fighting was to create a school environment that student and teacher actively participating in the learning process

where aggressive behavior was minimized by focusing energies on productive endeavors. When misbehavior occurs, it was corrected by firm, consistent and constantly administered disciplinary practice. Therefore, the focus of this practicum was the introduction and use of behavioral strategies to reduce fighting behavior within the elementary intermediate grades. The target group consists of grades three, four, and five. The target population was composed of 275 boys and girls. The target school building was composed of grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The age range of the target group was eight through thirteen years. Because the target group was of a low socio-economic level, all 275 students of the target population was on free lunch. Also, sixty-four (.64) percent of the target population was serviced with Chapter One. The target population serviced in exceptional student education (ESE) was four (.04) percent full-time and one percent (.01) part-time. Examining the previous years (1993 -1994) fighting referrals rates, indicate that twenty-three (.23) percent of elementary intermediate grades can not successfully avoid fighting (Appendix C). This statistic includes these students when they were in grades three and four.

Programs to enhance a moral type education and limit negative behavior must be comprehensive and begin in the elementary schools. These programs should teach awareness and resistance to counter-act peer pressure related to violent and negative behavior (U.S. DOE., 1993). Goal number six of the U.S. Department of Education Goals 2000

Program relates to the schools climate, atmosphere, and physical plant to ensure safety, discipline, and a drug free school setting. The target school does not currently have a comprehensive school-wide management plan.

Therefore, the writer contends that since behavior problem students exist within a classroom, the students come from their socio-economic background, a deficit of parental supervision regarding school involvement, and a neighborhood that has a drug history, indicates within this environment no behavior change program works.

Therefore, the target group had a discrepancy between the number of intermediate grade students who were not able to comply with the non-fighting policy of the district and those who can. Twenty-three percent of the students cannot successfully follow the no fighting behavior policy when being verbally harassed or physically touched by another student. Sixty-seven percent of the intermediate students in the target group were able to identify and resist the inappropriate verbal behavior or physically touching when it occurs. The discrepancy was ten percent of the target group will successfully follow the avoidance behaviors to stop fighting. The baseline data used for measuring this discrepancy statement was confirmed by administrative referral records, guidance referral records, and a pre-test questionnaire presented at the onset of the practicum project. The duration of this practicum will be for twelve weeks.

The writer will implement a project to change the fighting behavior of the target group. The students will be able to demonstrate mastery

viewing role playing performances, classroom discussion, and multimedia presentation using video tape. Such improvement will be documented by a pre-test and post -test design.

These accomplishments, the writer projects will have a positive and an affective result to decrease fighting in the target school. Previously, the students' lack of understanding and coping behavior needed to communicate with others was not apparent. Subsequently, their experience of relating to others in a school setting had been detrimental to the student body and school climate. Now, the students will experience personal success as they behave in a socially acceptable manner. However, certain characteristics must be kept in mind when referring to this target group as it relates to the practicum project. The following particular needs are to be considered when supporting the interests of the students within the target group. One, recognizing that there were behavior problem students that distract or take away time on-task within the classroom, and two the target group is of a low socio-economic background. Three, the inability of families to comprehend the English language and expectations of an American School. Four, parental supervision is lacking pertaining to the involvement of education with their children at home. Five, the vast majority of the student population is living within a high drug and crime environment, and six, a lack of local school related recreational and physical education facilities provided for the local community. In summary, this is the community makeup of the target group

population as it relates to the community which they live.

Outcome Objectives

The writer will implement a program of behavior change to reduce fighting of intermediate grade elementary students. There will be three objectives that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of this program. The time span for the practicum project will be twelve weeks.

The proposed objectives were:

1. After the target group has participated in the twelve week practicum project to de-escalate fighting, eighty percent of the target group teachers of the intermediate grades will be able to know how to de-escalate a fighting situation as measured by the teacher made pre-test and post - test (Appendix A, p.62).
2. After the twelve week implementation period, eighty percent of the target group will be able to identify the ten techniques used to de-escalate a fighting situation as measured by the teacher made pre-test and post-test (Appendix B, p.65).
3. After the twelve week implementation period for this practicum, the target group will demonstrate a fifty percent reduction in fighting as measured by the fighting referral baseline data (Appendix C, p.68) from sixty-four referrals for fighting to thirty-two referrals.

Chapter II
Research and
Planned Solution Strategies

Our national media broadcasts violence of a criminal nature. Disrespect and insubordination to parents or authority figures are seen as normal and acceptable. These examples are reinforced when a laugh track is played during the scene. Students of all ages are bombarded with actual and artificial violence through the video and audio media. Children today are exposed to extremely high level of stress and trauma. Homicides by adolescents increased sixty-one percent between 1979 to 1989, and an estimated quarter million students carry guns to school daily (American Psychological Association, 1993). A recent survey of 65,000 secondary students revealed that one-third of them felt unsafe at school, and half knew someone who carried a weapon to school (Centers for Disease Control, 1992).

The sense of danger is especially real in the inner city, as reflected in a sample of findings from recent surveys at urban high schools, fifty percent survey students reported knowing someone who was murdered (Lichtenstein et al.,1994). Next, one in five students reported had been threatened with a gun, and one-half of replied that they felt unsafe traveling to and from school (Sheley et. al.,1992). Each month approximately three percent of teachers and students in urban schools

are robbed or physically attacked. Nearly 17,000 students per month experience physical injuries serious enough to require medical attention (Cotton, 1994).

Within an elementary school setting , fighting and aggressive negative behavior can be exemplified in the forms of bullying. Children are not born to be bullies. It is a learned behavior affected by environmental factors related to the family, peer groups, and media. A few of these factors that directly contribute to learned aggressive behavior are: Parent overindulgence in allowing children to observe / listen to violence; inadequate parental monitoring of children's whereabouts and friendships; being assertive, parental inconsistent behavior patterns, and unsupportive home discipline; acceptance of aggressive behavior in males as normal and expected (Smith, 1992).

Research indicates that one in seven students is either a bully or has been the victim of a bully (Olweus, 1987). Bullying takes on four main forms: Physical attacks, verbal harassment, negative gestures, and peer isolation. Victims of bullying are often either handicapped, overweight, physically small, or display such vulnerable characteristics as anxiety, insecurity, sensitivity, and shyness. Bullies, on the other hand are usually underachievers and are five times more likely than other children as they grow older to be cited in juvenile court, to have more traffic violations, and be more abusive to their spouses and children. Boys are most often involved in physical acts of violence, however, girls share equally in the

other three forms (Smith, 1992).

A parents influence upon their children plays an important role. Children don't make moral decisions in isolation (Berman, 1990). The child's home life does effect their personality and thought processes as guided and taught by their parents or guardians, it concludes that if violent or aggressive behavior is played out in the home, it will be played out in school too.

Educators and parents along with community (Church) must help children develop and awareness of these conflicts that occur in daily living, whether it stems from the home or not. Many conflicts can be resolved naturally and easily given the correct intervention. Many students are ignorant to the issues of what is acceptable or correct that confronts them in a macro-social institution that a school represents. Students justify their actions thereby formulating defensible reasons for the choices they make. Psychological research MacCallum (1993), indicates that individuals fail to behave in a non-violent manner for four distinct reasons. One, the individual may be ignorant to the issues. Second, a students may be deficient in forming a defensible course for their actions. Third, the individual may fail to give priority to moral concerns of right and wrong. Finally, non-violent behavior can result from an inability to implement an effective plan for correction and elimination of the negative behavior.

In conclusion, elementary students behavior is learned at home and

exhibited when they arrive in school. The choices students make primarily arrive from their parental code of right and wrong. When negative behavior is demonstrated, corrective behaviors must be initiated if not consequence are meaningless.

Children of Parents with higher moral reasoning levels allocated more time for family discussion, encourage more child participation in discussions, and encourage children to express their feelings as well as their views. Higher moral reasoning students also had higher moral reasoning parents (MacCallum, 1993). Studies show that personal beliefs and biases can effect interpretation of problems and decision making (Bebeau, 1993). All students do not come to school with a clear view of their role and responsibility. Practice and feedback are necessary to achieve clarity. Students need practice applying these concepts to real-life situations. To be effective, a program of behavior change should examine the dilemmas that confront students when violent behavior is shown, or lack of confidence and knowledge to make the correct choices. Confidence from past experiences clarifies intent. Perry (1994), found that aggressive children are more confident than non-aggressive children when encountering relational discourse by peers. Furthermore, children doing best in school come from families who have a strong commitment to meaningful values regarding the importance of ones behavior and performance; thereby protecting children against the risks that are part of same school experiences (Weisner & Garnier, 1992).

In conclusion, children need to learn that self-control and respect for others are behaviors necessary for effective relationships. Students need to be taught to develop impulse control or delayed gratification to cope with the on-slaught of selfish embellishment. Positive, healthy and unselfish strategies must be employed to educate the students to reducing fighting and increase positive coping behaviors. Also, discussion techniques are effective in promoting behavior clarification with explicit criteria, practice, and feedback are provided to improve decision making quality.

Who is responsible for behavior? Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behavior (MacCallum, 1993). To encourage the capacity for moral behavior, respectful of a person, in a context for the cultivation of working relationships in a society, is an individuals personal responsibility. Evidence has shown that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds sometimes need more detailed instruction pertaining to expectations and procedures than other students in order to insure responsibility of understanding and compliance (Cotton, 1990).

Actions of students are freely chosen, and individuals can be held responsible and accountable for what takes place. Lying, cheating, fighting, and taking advantage of others are to be regretted not only in social terms but what it does in terms of damage to one's character. Fighting and lying are to be condemned just as much as honesty and respect for individuals are upheld for their affect and quality of

with others. Behaviors of disrespect can be a precursor to situations that could lead to a violent climate (Arnold, 1994). On the other hand, if students are to learn how to regulate these behaviors, they must have opportunities to (1) make decisions regarding how to behave and (2) follow through on the decisions made. (Johnson, 1992).

An individual's perspective of their actions develops from rules and social expectations that are external to the person in which the self is identified with or has internalized the rules or expectations of others (MacCallum, 1993). Consider human nature Bebeau (1993), each of us is capable of developing an internal persuasion for prioritizing values and morals of right and wrong. Previous work in moral development literature from Crick and Ladd (1990), indicates that children do attempt to integrate two or more pieces of relevant information in the process of reaching a decision about the morality of their or another behavior. Furthermore, they showed 3-5 grade children may view verbal aggression as a more effective means of getting what they want and avoiding sanctions from adults. A curriculum embodying a nurturing environment and showing a sense of social responsibility that gives students opportunities to understand how to contribute positively to the lives of others and to the improvement of the world around them should be provided from early elementary grade through adult (Berman, 1990).

In conclusion, Theodore Roosevelt once said to educate a person

in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society. Students can be smart about matters of right and wrong when left to themselves however, and still choose the wrong because of selfishness. Social responsibility is the personal investment in the well being of others. The most effective means of helping students develop this relationship is to give them the opportunity to enter and engage the real world around them (Berman, 1990). Students lack of sensitivity and reasoning concerning social behavior are results from their moral upbringing. Any set of rules brings with it its own moral code. Morality implies a sense of right and wrong which cannot be reduced to individual need, interest, or convenience as a social metaphor. Unlimited individual aspirations or whims must be constructed by a social morality. To act morally is to act in the light of a collective interest, for example a school setting (Larsen, 1994).

Urban educational programs unfortunately can no longer just focus on basic skill requirements recommended for elementary grade students. Schools must provide students with experiences of success and repetitious demonstrations of acceptable behavior to counteract the messages of violence, failure, disrespect, and selfishness that they are constantly receiving. During recent years the notion of teaching as a moral endeavor has once more been supported both by philosophers Joseph & Efron (1993) and educationalists Bergem (1993). The concept of teaching and the role of the teacher has emerged from the ideas presented by

behaviorists. Teachers are thought of as moral agents, and encouraged to express their own moral view in order to maintain the confidence that both students and parents have developed toward their school system (Ryan, 1986).

Educating the character of students regarding violent behavior must pervade all aspects of a school's operation. These behaviors change elements should include but not limited to: developing core values for the school to be implemented, involving community support, include these elements into existing elementary curriculum, and include a whole staff empowerment plan (Huffman, 1993). Furthermore, studies by Kalish (Kalish, 1992) and Murphy (Murphy, 1988), support these findings that behavior change programs to reduce violent behavior in addition to employing a *character* component are successful.

There are two basic types of school rule distinctions: One, *social-conventional* rules refers to the school rules that are arbitrarily based upon individual choice of the student. Reflection of obedience pertains to the individual student without hindering other peers. Second, *moral-reference* type refers to the school rules that protect the rights and freedoms of individuals from one or more people who take license of others (Maccallum, 1993). Hence, teachers want their students to be kind to each other, to be truthful, and to have self-esteem (Joseph & Efron, 1993).

Teachers must be aware of the fact that there is a value system

that has to be balanced against societal standards. Professional actions must not only be evaluated in terms of the daily functional ability but in terms of moral expertise and reliability (Bergem, 1993). As stated earlier there are reasons why students fail to act and behave in a socially acceptable manner in a school setting. Students must give priority to the concerns of their interactions within and between their peer groups.

Whether it's verbal abuse, physical assault, or weapons usage, school staff members are required to respond increasingly more to these acts of anger and out of control behavior of students. Suspension though it may be required for violent or potentially dangerous acts, does not actually teach the student the behaviors necessary to stop the action to be taken in the first place (Fine, 1986).

In conclusion, What effects go on in a school will have an impact on all pupils equally and without regard to socio-economic conditions (Druian & Butler, 1994). From gathering data, it appears that what is having the greatest impact on behavior-performance is the over-crowding, congestive traffic patters, and the quantity of teachers to pupil ratio (Latham, 1992). Duke (1989), writes that orderly schools are characterized by commitment to appropriate student behavior and clear behavior expectations for students. Short (1988), writes well-disciplined schools indicate that a student-centered environment, incorporating teacher-student problem solving activities to promote student responsibility of their own actions and belongings is more effective in reducing behavior

problems.

Research investigations which have yielded information on effective disciplinary practices have also produced finding about ineffective practices. It is important for educators to be aware of the strategies research has shown to be ineffective, in part because this knowledge can assist in planning (Cotton, 1994). The appeal of package discipline programs is also a hindrance to there effectiveness. The quick results that these programs yield arrive from the development and responsibility of students who must comprehend certain character traits of appropriate social behavior of which rules are based (Curwin and Mendler, 1988).

Assertive Discipline (AD), as a plan to reduce discipline referrals in the schools, shows that the claims made by its creator are untrue. The research evidence to substantiate this claim finds only sixteen studies in twelve years that support the claims of its creator that an AD program will produce an eighty percent reduction in student misconduct. The claims made by Canter are simply not supported by the existing and available literature (Render et al., 1989). This gives evidence that "canned programs" are not the god-send for the curing of discipline problems in our schools. Smith (1992) states that fighting in school can be drastically decreased through careful intervention. What is needed is a practical approach program that offers interventions based on actual incidences of potential fighting behaviors.

Key to overcoming these problems is to create a school

environment whereby students and teachers can engage in the learning process, where aggressive behavior is minimized and violent behavior is eliminated (DOE, 1993). The error of most programs is that it indoctrinates students that only adults or authority figures are needed to resolve conflict and reduce fighting. These programs cost instructional and administrative time, and work only as long as the students are under a watchful eye. Hence, this program approach does not empower students and its objectives are short lived.

There are effective ways to eliminate violence in schools. One, by coordinating violence-reduction efforts between schools and their community. Two, train students and staff in conflict resolution skills. With a better understanding of the factors that put students at risk for violent behavior, and attention to those that protect them from harmful influences, schools can become healthy learning environment that provides a strong defense against violence and drugs use (DOE, 1993).

In order to decide which type of discipline program will work best, it helps to know what type of discipline problems are occurring. Typically, most discipline problems involve either conflicts among students, conflicts between students and teachers, or conflicts between students and standards of acceptable conduct. By training students to manage conflict constructively, effective discipline programming can empower students to solve their own problems and regulate their own and their classmates' behavior. Educators and students need to attune themselves to the

signals of potential fighting behavior. When teachers and students are knowledgeable of these signals, there can be interventions used to de-escalate fighting behavior. Consequently, programs to curb fighting and violence are elements of a well defined disciplined school. Listed herein are seven programs that have successfully demonstrated de-escalation of fighting and violent behavior, and enhancing appropriate social interaction communication. These programs took place in schools throughout the United States.

A South Carolina elementary school produced a video called "Nobody Likes a Bully". It is designed to raise the awareness level of students in grades three through six regarding fighting. In addition a student watch program is used to teach an awareness of peer negotiation skills needed to help others in conflict situations (Smith, 1992).

Next, a peer counselor type of program called Student Watch. This program stresses that students are able to handle problems by planning outcomes before actions are taken, along with working out solutions without adult interventions. The Student Watch Program was implemented in four schools and reported fifty percent reduction in fighting referrals in eight weeks (Cahoon, 1988).

The Aspen Declaration on Character Education and The Character Education Partnership has provided information in the implementation of a character trait curriculum that can be instituted within schools to educate the value and worth of individuals. The character education programs

emphasis is to be placed on the top of the nations educational agenda. Also, Princeton Project 55 brought together key national education organizations to recommit themselves to character education (Lickona, 1993).

The Peace maker Program provides role-playing opportunities to practice the procedures and skills involved in negotiating and mediating . After the students received the negotiation and mediator training. The frequency of student conflicts that teachers had to manage dropped eighty percent, and the number of conflicts referred to the principal were reduced to zero. Traditional discipline procedures such as expulsion and scolding teach students to depend on authority figures to resolve conflicts. The Peacemaker Program teaches children how to mediate disputes and negotiate solution themselves (Johnson et. al. 1992).

A conflict resolution program to reducing fighting began in an elementary school in Nevada. It is called the Mediator Program. This program consists of teachers selecting two students in each classroom that serve as mediators. During their recess time, these students report to the principal office to learn how to be effective mediators. The student's duties are to be available for service in the playground and cafeteria as well as their classroom. Since the program began, the number of discipline referrals have declined, academic time on task has increased, and the school environment became friendly, happy, and safe. (Cahoom, 1988).

The Second Step Violence Prevention Program is a fighting and

violence prevention program (Second Step Violence Prevention Program, 1994). This was a teleconference that aired over the target school's closed circuit television network. The program is designed to emphasize the emotional and cognitive side of decision making for students to successfully judge the intentions of others and to self-discover their own motives. The program provides evidences that promote violence with individuals. The program examples stated were: Lack of modeling of appropriate behavior, lack of practicing correct behavior emotional response, inappropriate beliefs, developmental delays. The Second Step Violence Prevention Program mentions considerations that are necessary for a successful behavior change program. These aspects are: Empathy, impulse control, anger management (control feelings), pro-social, and a think out loud process. The benefits of the Program were shown to be problem solving situation interventions, the program limited off task behavior and increased time on-task learning, and finally adults helped model for students the appropriate interventions for the correct occasion.

One other program developed to promote positive behavior is school is called the Child Development Project. The Child Development Project promotes pro-social behaviors such as helpfulness, fairness, and responsibility toward others. Finally the use of the social interaction component, students were assisted in developing self-discovery skills, empathy toward others feelings, self-control, and ability de-escalate potential violent situations (Berman, 1990).

Finally, The Jefferson Center of Character Education in Pasadena, California developed a behavior change curriculum. An elementary school in the Los Angeles School District piloted the program. It included eleven elements essential if violent behavior was to decrease and student conduct was to improve. The elements ranged from direct instruction of classroom materials to parent involvement, to lessons in actual effective behaviors to be used to de-escalate violent behavior. Lessons focused on telling the students what behaviors should be exhibited, instead of telling them what not to do. Visual reinforcement cards and posters were used through out the school as reinforcement . Each month and or specific weeks in a month, behavior elements were emphasized throughout the school site for reminders. Furthermore, the teacher materials were kept straight forward with brevity. The Jefferson County Program has been used in the Newport Beach, California area. Their program icon is called Respect and Responsibility. This is a thematic behavior change adaptation of the Jefferson County Program. In Honolulu, Hawaii a program similar to the Jefferson County Program called Steps to Success has proved well. It emphasized individual responsibility for actions regarding behavior change within their elementary school. Also past experiences of schools in St. Louis and Pittsburgh and elsewhere provided strong evidence that behavior change programs to reduce fighting can be effective (Brooks & Kann, 1993).

In conclusion, the measurement process of the Jefferson County

Program uses a pre and post assessment evaluation tool with consultation during the program. Teachers are inserviced periodically to keep the individual school goals in mind and adapting lesson plans accordingly. The Jefferson County Program, piloted in twenty-five elementary schools, showed during the 1990-1991 school year, that major discipline problems (fighting) decreased twenty-five percent and minor discipline problems (off-task behavior) decreased thirty-nine percent with suspensions falling by sixteen percent.

In summary, if parents are not able to share and teach their children the art of living and cooperating, then we as educators need to be given the authority to meet the high ethical standards to conquer this challenge. Schools must develop appropriately challenging experiences that stress development critical thinking and the development of social skills (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Educators who teach students who have the propensity for violence still must hold high expectations for appropriate behavior, despite their past behavioral history. Programs used to de-escalate violent behavior must also provide structure that enables students to develop more appropriate behavior while eliminating inappropriate ones (Petty, 1989).

However, a behavior change program should be integrated within the curriculum and not take the form of a "special" unit. A program that is simply inserted into the curriculum carries with it an inherent artificiality and discontinuity. The life of such programs is generally brief. The

program must be vested by the teachers encouraged, supported and the vision communicated by the leadership for it to be successful (Nucci, 1987). When students are exposed to experiences of quality and success, they too will perform at a higher expectancy level thereby elevating their maturity and knowledge in response to an outward stimulus (Hodgkinson, 1986).

In conclusion, a carefully crafted program of behavior change designed to de-escalate fighting should also measure but not be limited to the test of reversibility (would you want to be treated this way?), and universal sales ability (would you want all persons to act this way in a similar situation.), along with solution strategies and evaluation methods that promote respect for individuality, and a commitment to the learning experience. Not to teach children these core ethical values is a grave moral failure (Lickonia, 1993).

Planned Solution Strategies

Children need to learn that self-control and respect for others are behaviors necessary for de-escalation of fighting in a school setting. Because parents are hurried today, many can not teach the behaviors needed to de-escalate a fighting situation to communicate effectively and constructively without the use of force or violence. The source of the problem may come from a parents ignorance of importance or not

spending the quality time to model the behavior. Students are being raised as children who are incapable of expressing self-control in non-threatening ways.

The instruction of specific desirable traits requires the building up of integrity and respect for individual students. By providing students with examples of effective non-violent forms of expression along with positive interpersonal relationships skills, educators as well as parents can guide their children in successful interpersonal relationships.

Therefore, the solution strategy the writer has chose included forms of appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication techniques. Crick and Ladd (1990), suggest using communication interventions such as stating the tone of the aggression act or words in a less hostile and socially acceptable manner to not denigrate but to build up the student. The purpose being to educate the students in not only how to express themselves but how to effectively listen. Next a character component was emphasized throughout the Practicum project. Kalpatrick (1990), reveals that it is important to implement a behavior change program emphasizing the character of the individual, the dignity each person deserves, and knowledge of effective communication skills illustrating persuasion and empathy.

Next students need to be taught to develop impulses control or delayed gratification to cope with the on-slaught of selfish embellishment. Positive, healthy and unselfish strategies must be employed to educate

the students how not to coax a fight by using positive coping behaviors. Also, strategies were provided to allow feedback for the students to keep them aware of the expectations and purpose for each activity. Therefore, students will acquire the foresight to avoid potential situations from becoming fights.

By implementing a behavior change program involving interventions for communication, cooperative activities, and de-escalation technique to avoid violent acts, will restore dignity, and worth to the participants, confidence, and competence in resolving conflicts between students in a socially acceptable and respectable manner, whereby emphasizing individual choice and responsibility for the actions the students make throughout this project.

Therefore, one implementation concept shown through daily and weekly trials of learning non-violent behavior forms of socialization, the student will be able to demonstrate correct choices when violent actions occur. The interventions used to de-escalate fighting are to give the students a working practical knowledge of respect, dignity, duty, cooperation and responsibility in relation to themselves and others in the different contexts of which they act.

The writer will pick ten different interventions to de-escalate fighting and implement them for each week of the project. Furthermore, during each week a video tape will be shown on how to use the interventions effectively with commentary provide for clarity. The teachers of the target

group will be serviced approximately four times during the implementation period . The purpose being to reinforce what is being explained to the students. Since the classroom teachers spend the majority of the time with their students, this reinforcement will encourage the target group to remain aware of the importance to de-escalate a potential fighting situation.

CHAPTER III

Method

The behavior change program to reduce fighting in the intermediate grades of an elementary school began in the second semester. Each of the activities presented were to develop a knowledge base for the target group in preparation to de-escalate a fight when the unfortunate opportunity arises. The target population took the knowledge and experience that they have learned along with their respective attempts to cease the situation of fighting by holding themselves accountable for the interventions of their choice. During each week of the implementation process, the writer focused on one specific intervention method designed to provide practical experience in the de-escalating of a fight within an elementary school setting. Furthermore, throughout the implementation period the target group was kept informed on how to de-escalate a potential fight situation by showing the desired outcome results.

Attendance of the target population was monitored through the homeroom teacher of each grade. Remediation of the desired activites were provided as a review for the future weeks. These review sessions were the prerequisite for the weekly lesson that provided purpose and continuity. The writer was responsible for all record keeping, the issuing of the pre and post-test, the teacher in service sessions, and the presentation of the twelve week implementation program.

During the implementation period fighting referral records were kept by the assistant principal and the writer. The assistant principal and the writer were the only individuals in control of this measurement. Furthermore, meeting dates, topics of instruction, and a school calendar of events were provided to the parents and school staff throughout the implementation process as needed. The target group teachers were in serviced on the purposes, procedure, and expected outcomes to de-escalate fighting within the intermediate grades of three through five.

Week One Implementation Program: Introduction
and Pre -Test

During the first week, a news release (Appendix H, p.79) directed toward the parents to inform them of the schools behavior change program and its objectives was sent home. Also, the target group school teachers were in serviced (Appendix I, p.81) to receive their behavior change pre-test (Appendix A, p.62), a schedule of weekly implementation activities, time lines, and in service meeting dates regarding the practicum project. The resulted meeting with the target group teachers was encouraging and supportive toward the writers efforts and mission. During week one the writer wrote a letter to the target group parents explaining the objectives and processes of the program. Also, when the target school's weekly news letter was published it contained a brief paragraph about the implementation of the behavior change program and the techniques covered relating to there corresponding weeks.

The target group was pre-tested (Appendix B, p.65) during their physical education class time. Students who transferred into the target school after the practicum project was implemented, were not counted in the practicum.

Hence, the school-based closed circuit television studio was used as the location for the production and broadcasting of the program. A backdrop was put in place to contrast the speaker and performers. The de-escalation technique names and methods mentioned on the broadcast were placed on the background screen and referred to when needed as a reinforcement and visual stimulus for the viewing audience.

Week Two Implementation Program:

The target group teachers were serviced (Appendix I, p.81) for the second time to begin their second de-escalation of fighting in service training class. The in service program began by reviewing the purpose and outcome of the three methods to de-escalate a fight that will be covered for the next three weeks within the practicum project. Therefore, the in service discussed the Apology Technique, Inner Voice Technique, and Name Calling Technique. The writer lead the target group teachers in a discussion of the above mentioned techniques and their appropriate use in and out of the classroom. Furthermore, a brief presentation of the schools congestive traffic routes was introduced to provide an awareness of potential touching by students as they travel to their respective destinations. The examples cited were: 1) The kindergarten building

hallway where the media, art, and music classroom intersect. 2) The outside cafeteria hallway. 3) The physical education walkway. 4) The after school dismissal in the park.

Week Two Implementation Program:

Apology Technique

The target students were introduced to the behavior change program of implementation entitled the Apology Technique. This one week program presented issues and demonstrations of how effective verbal skills can be used for expressing your thoughts in a manner that exudes a non-aggressive or blame oriented intent to a person. The program was produced on close circuit television. The writer lectured on the importance of apologizing when a variety of misunderstandings occur. Also, selected students role played these examples as the writer narrated the dramatizations.

Week Three Implementation Program:

Inner Voice Technique

The targeted students will be introduced to the behavior change program of implementation entitled the Inner Voice Technique. This one week program presented issues and demonstrations of verbal and non-verbal communication when conversing with peers. Also, the program explained the essentials of understating how feelings can be communicated internally. Furthermore, providing a process of cognitive

problem solving, the students demonstrate how intentionally one goes through a check list to choose the correct interventions to de-escalate a fight at that point. The program was produced on close circuit television. The writer lectured on the importance of thinking before responding out loud. Also, choice students role played these examples as the writer narrated the dramatizations.

Week Four Implementation Program:

Name Calling Technique

The targeted students will be introduced to the behavior change program of implementation entitled the Name Calling Technique. This one week program presented issues and demonstrations of why peers put others down derogatorily. Also, showing what is the appropriate expression of feelings or talk to communicate to another person. Furthermore, a plan of internalizing the what, and why of the person doing the insulting and how the receiver should respond in the negative but to self-analyze and use the inner-voice technique. The program was produced on close circuit television. The writer lectured on the importance of why students name call individuals, and the putting down of others at the expense of building oneself up. Also, choice students role played these examples as the writer narrated the dramatizations.

Week Five Implementation Program:

During this week the target group teachers were in serviced (Appendix I, p.81) for the third time. The in service program discussed the

past three weeks of the behavior change techniques, and asked for any questions, comments, or examples that they would like to share. Further discussion introduced by the writer covered the aspects of how a teacher can position themselves in their classroom for greater control and visibility to prevent violent behavior.

This current in service program discussed the Escape Technique, Be Calm Technique, and Compromise / Negotiation Technique. The target group teachers discussed the above mentioned techniques and the use of them appropriately in and out of the classroom. Also, the importance of task completion and deadlines as they related to student behavior, pressure, and expectations. Additionally, a brief paragraph was written regarding the three upcoming behavior change techniques. This paragraph was published in the target school's newsletter and sent home with all members of the student body.

Week Five Implementation Program:

Escape Technique

The targeted students were introduced to the behavior change program of implementation entitled the Escape Technique. This one week program presented issues and demonstrations of how to effectively remove yourself from the potential fighting environment, and how not to own a behavior problem by giving it up to the person who is threatening you. The program was produced on close circuit television. The writer

lectured on the importance of removing yourself from a potential fighting situation, by demonstrating that walking away is the honorable action and how it can be executed with pride and esteem. Also, selected students role played these examples as the writer narrated the dramatization.

Week Six Implementation Program:

Be Calm Technique

The targeted students were introduced to the behavior change program of implementation entitled the Be Calm Technique. This one week program presented issues and demonstrations of how to remain calm when others cause you to feel threatened or fearful. Calming skills were discussed and shown to relieve anxiety by allowing the student to assess the situation that they have placed themselves in and to ascertain a rationale choice in the decision making process. Keeping in mind that counting ten seconds to yourself will allow time to analyze and de-escalate a potential fight from occurring. The program was produced on close circuit television. The writer lectured on the importance of remaining calm and analyzing a potential fighting situation when it arises. Also, selected students role played these examples as the writer narrated the dramatization.

Week six was the mid-point of the practicum project. The writer presented a formative evaluation questionnaire (Appendix G, p.76) to the target group teachers and asked for their opinion of how the project

is progressing at this particular point and / or provide the necessary comments for a mid-course change of direction. The target teachers' feedback indicated that they were pleased at how the program was progressing.

**Week Seven Implementation Program: Compromise and
Negotiation Technique**

The target students were introduced to the behavior change program of implementation entitled the Compromise / Negotiation technique. This one week program presented issues and demonstrations of how two or more individuals can give up something to resolve a conflict. Examples of such game demonstrations that resolved conflict by providing a compromising tool were rock-scissors-paper, odds and evens, or thumb wrestling. Furthermore, each student understood that negotiating was a tool to be used when disagreements arise. Opportunities were provided whereby eventually everyone would receive a turn in demonstrating this form of cooperation between peers. The program was produced on close circuit television. The writer lectured on the importance of understanding when and how to compromise or to negotiate to resolve a potential fighting situation before it occurs. Also, selected students role played these examples as the writer narrated the dramatization.

Week Eight Implementation Program:

During this week the target group teachers were in service (Appendix I, p.81) for the fourth time. The in service program discussed

the past three weeks of behavior change techniques from week five, and elicit any comments or questions. Further discussion introduced the anger continuum and how to evaluate a student's behavior based upon a spectrum of emotion. Next, the in service program discussed the Threat Free Explanation Technique, Humor / Exaggeration Technique, and Decision Time Technique. The target group teachers discussed the above mentioned techniques along with the appropriate use of them in and out of the classroom, the importance of how the misuse of equipment and materials occur, and the misuse of a right or privilege given to the student from a teacher as it related to classroom management and teacher knowledge of past behavior problems.

Week Eight Implementation Program:

Threat - Free Explanation

The targeted students were introduced to the behavior change program of implementation entitled the Threat-Free Explanation. This one week program presented issues and demonstrations of how two or more students can communicate without emotional feelings being expressed in a manner of being out of control. This was accomplished by stating the view points that support the facts of the rule, teacher expectations, or simply being in the situation as it is occurring. Furthermore, illustrating by statement of fact to a peer and showing no threat to the other student. For example, a simple reminder of the responsibility and consequence of the students behavior serves as a cue to remind each student of the

responsibility in stating truth and showing concern and kindness at no other students' expense. Also, this method should be used without drawing attention to the students. This program was produced on close circuit television. The writer lectured on the importance of stating the facts to another student when one is committing a wrongful action to another peer. During this demonstration, the sense of owning ones behavior was clearly emphasized. Also, selected students role played these examples as the writer narrated the dramatization.

Week Nine Implementation Program:

Humor / Exaggeration Technique

The targeted students were introduced to the behavior change program of implementation entitled the Humor / Exaggeration Technique. This one week program presented issues and demonstrations of how two or more students can eliminate a potential fight by using humor or exaggeration to de-escalate the current situation. Using a joke in a positive way, in a similar instance relieved tension and provided a release to escape the potential argument or escalation of a fight, especially when a person was using negative language to put down another student. Furthermore, a group dynamics exercise was demonstrated and explained showing the affects of what positive reinforcement can do to an aggressive student to withdraw from violent behavior intentions toward another student. The program was produced on close circuit television.

The writer lectured on the importance of understanding when and how to use humor and exaggeration to resolve a potential fighting situation from occurring. Also, selected students role played these examples as the writer narrated the dramatization.

Week Ten Implementation Program:

Decision Time Technique

The targeted students were introduced to the behavior change program of implementation entitled the Decision Time Technique. This one week program presented issues and demonstrations of how students can share responsibilities with each other when it was seen that one student was more in need of something than the other. Demonstrations encompassed classroom chores and responsibilities, waiting in line for the cafeteria lunch, playground / recess, and hallway monitoring. Furthermore, additional remediation was included from week six using the Compromise / Negotiation Technique since both have similar examples of implementation but distinct outcomes. The program was produced on close circuit television. The writer lectured on the importance of understanding when and how to use the decision time technique to eliminate a potential fighting situation from occurring. Also, selected students role played these examples as the writer narrated the dramatization.

Week Eleven Implementation Program:

During this week the target group teachers were in serviced (Appendix I, p.81) for the fifth and final time for the last technique used to de-escalate a fight. The in service program began by explaining and reviewing the previous learned lessons from week eight and asked for any questions, comments, or examples from what was encountered. The in service program discussed the Impulse Control Technique, and the dissemination of the student and teacher post-test. The target group teachers first discussed the above mentioned technique and the use of them appropriately in and out of the classroom.

Week Eleven Implementation Program:

Impulse Control Technique

The target students were introduced to the behavior change program of implementation entitled Impulse Control Technique. This one week program presented issues and demonstrations of how students can exhibit delayed gratification by postponing desires for a later time thereby de-escalating a potential fight situation. During this lesson, a review was provided using all nine other techniques mentioned previously. An effort was made to intertwine the behavior change methods into an effective demonstration. The program was produced on close circuit television. The writer lectured on the importance of understanding when and how to use the students own impulse control to resolve a potential fighting situation from occurring. Also, selected students role played these examples as the writer narrated the dramatization.

Week Twelve Implementation Program:

Post - Test

During this week, the targeted students were given the post - test to measure their knowledge of how to de-escalate a fight situation successfully. Furthermore, the students were given a word search puzzle that provided the names of the techniques used and appropriate word phases to remember (Appendix D, p.70). Next, the target group teacher's were given their post-test to measure their retention of learned knowledge regarding potential fighting situations and where they might occur.

In summary, The writer anticipated a rise in the student's self - esteem as a result of the increased knowledge and confidence from being more aware of not only how to de-escalate a fighting situation, but understanding that when anger is displaced, it is not always intended toward the person that it is directed too. The writer expected this project to positively impact the students involved not only while they were in school but outside as well.

Educators must help children, if parents don't, to develop an awareness of conflicts that occur in daily living. Many conflicts are resolved naturally and easily. However, in this modern era where violent acts receive primary media coverage, students are bombarded with the sights and sounds of actual and artificial violence. Often this is irrational in nature or portrayal and not based on one item of reality.

Young children enter school having already experienced conflict in their life. This usually includes conflict which centers around the basic human needs such as hunger, sleep, affection, and security. Professional educators have the responsibility if parents abdicate, to help children become aware of the causes of conflict and to develop techniques to resolve them in socially beneficial ways.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The retention of the ten techniques used to de-escalate a potential fighting situation was necessary for the enhancement of classroom management and school safety for all staff and students. Hence, the evaluation process measured the reduction or elimination of fighting within the intermediate grades of an elementary school. The referral rate for fighting in the 1993-1994 school year beginning in January (week 3) and ending in April (week 2) was sixty-four referrals. Sixty-four referrals translated into 23% of the intermediate grades who could not avoid fighting. The average fighting referral rate was thirteen percent above normal. The average fighting referral rate should have been ten percent within the given time frame. The implementation process with specific outcomes was measured for twelve weeks.

Beginning on January 23, 1995 and ending on April 14, 1995, the twelve week practicum project was concluded. Regarding Objective One, it was proposed that the target group teachers would increase their knowledge of the target school areas where fighting often occurs, recognizing what leads to potential fighting behavior, and how to de-escalate a potential fighting situation as seen in or out of the classroom. It was proposed that the target group teachers would increase their post-test scores by 80% as stated in Objective One (Appendix A, p.62).

After six weeks of implementation, the target group teachers and the assistant principal met with the writer to discuss the midterm assessment. The teachers expressed enthusiasm about the program and were excited about the success they were seeing and the increase in student attention toward personal responsibility and ownership of behavior. The assistant principal expressed approval of the close circuit television broadcast format. The use of students portraying (role playing) positive and negative behavior students was introduced. All teachers felt the behavior change program was beneficial to de-escalate fighting and wanted to continue using the program in the future.

At week seven of the implementation period, a fifth grade teacher returned to school from a leave of absence. This teacher missed the initial phases of implementation; therefore, did not participate in the post-test section of the implementation.

In conclusion, the Teacher pre-test score was 70%. The proposed post-test score for the target group teachers was 80%. The actual post-test score after the implementation of the practicum project was 84.4%. This showed an actual increase of knowledge by 14.4% (Appendix E, p.72).

Regarding Objective Two, it was projected that 80% of the target group would be able to identify the ten techniques used to de-escalate a fighting situation as measured by the teacher made post-test when stated in Objective Two (Appendix B, p.65). The results of the target group

students post-test scores indicated two out of the three grades increased their knowledge (Appendix F, p.74) of the ten techniques to de-escalate a potential fight situation. However these scores were not significant and did not achieve the required eighty percent success rate.

A possible reason for the inability to achieve Objective Two post-test score success rate could be that few teachers actually took the time to embellish their students regarding the on-air program. Although, some teachers did incorporate what they could throughout the day. At times, certain classrooms had students who acted as distracters by demonstrating off-task behavior during the on-camera presentation that would have caused parts of each dramatization to be missed.

In conclusion, it appears from the post-test data (Appendix F , p.75) that student attention was not focused upon the morning show presentation as it appeared in the classroom format. The peer group role playing presentation did not appear to have the attraction or impact as the writer thought for retention of knowledge. Also, student and parent communication regarding the behavior change program did not appear significant as proposed.

Regarding Objective Three, the projected results for reduction in fighting referrals was 50% taking into account that 20% of the target population was not able to avoid a potential fight situation as measured by the fighting referral baseline data from sixty-four referrals for fighting to thirty-two referrals. The actual results of the practicum project showed a

reduction in fighting referrals by 61% when considering the target population. Furthermore, nine percent of the target population indicated that they could not avoid a potential fight situation (Appendix C, p.69). These statistics are significant since they surpass the stated objective.

Possible explanations for this occurrence is that the writer had the availability of being seen by the target population throughout each day starting from early arrival, during class time, and afternoon dismissal. This could provide for greater retention of learning since the students would associate the writer with the behavior change presentation. Also, the target group teachers could have reinforced certain aspects of the video program. In conclusion, the schools' newsletter was sent home with information regarding the behavior change program outcomes (Appendix H, p.79). The parents were encouraged to lead their children in practicing appropriate behavior whereby creating a reduction of fighting referrals.

In conclusion, for most intermediate grade elementary students, a behavior change program does hold interest and enthusiasm among its participants; however, there were students that exhibited violent behavior somewhat consistently through out the study. These students belonged to the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program at the target school. It is important to mention here that these students were not included in the projects target population due to the implementation of a level system newly designed to meet the unique needs of this varying exceptionailities class.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

This behavior change program to de-escalate fighting was presented at the writers school. The meeting included teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and support staff that were involved in this practicum project. The strategies implemented during the second semester of the 1994-1995 school year will continue with their modifications for an indefinite period. Additional intervention strategies are being researched and implementation is being planned.

In future programs, before the implementation of objectives, consideration should be given to individual student learning styles as pertaining to their audio-visual motor perception. If these factors are neglected before implementation, students cognitive ability through reasoning could be affected. The writer also suggests reviewing the meaning of certain words relating to responsible action and individual choices that correspond to the refraining from violent behavior. This could possibly aide in the retention of knowledge as it pertains to the student post-test scores. Considerations relating to a students (self) ego, verses the conflicts perpetrated from a groups influence (peer pressure) needs to be studied for further recommendations.

Short and long term recommendations were suggested by the target group teachers and administrators for the practicum project as it

related to the school wide discipline plan of the target school.

Short-term recommendations include: 1) Basically keep demonstrating the behavior change program as it is currently being displayed using student role models.

Long-term recommendations included: 1) Keep the television format, but include the exact use of word meanings as they pertain to the dramatization. 2) Keep emphasizing individual ownership of behavior as it relates to the power of influence or wisdom in refraining from violence. 3) Emphasize role reversal explaining how it would feel if these violent actions happened to yourself. 4) Keep developing newer problem-solving techniques and examples with there appropriate consequences.

In conclusion, the future plan for this project is to provide a behavior change resource library of video-tape (Appendix J, p.82) for staff development regarding the de-escalating of potential fighting especially designed for intermediate grade elementary students. It is true that when you raise the awareness level of a group of students concerning a program like fighting, there will usually be a temporary decrease in the problem. However, for there to be a long range effect, prevention programs like this one must become an integral part of a school-wide discipline effort where students are to be involved throughout the year. It is possible that additional remediation is required to assist these students who are prone to violent behavior. Further research is needed in exploring the areas of violent behavior type students as they interact in a

school-socialized setting.

Recommendations to improve Objective One are: None given, since the objective was accomplished. Also, recommendations to improve Objective Three are: None given, since the objective was accomplished. Therefore, two out of the three objectives met the required criteria.

Recommendations to improve Objective Two are: 1) Teachers need to monitor the retention of learning within the classroom by a question and answer session after each presentation. 2) Eliminate the number of distractions occurring during the video presentation. 3) The morning show program had to be concluded at a specific time for the schools direct instruction reading program to begin, thus shortening the writer's presentation. At times this lead to a lack of continuity between segments by shorting explanations of each dramatization. The recommendation is to have enough time needed to fulfill the requirement. 4) There were frequent absences of the Media Specialist which halted the video production, consequently three to four school days per week throughout the implementation period was given to actual on-camera time. 5) The public address system was off-limits to the writer.

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APPENDIXES

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APPENDIX A
Teacher
Pre-and Post-Test

APPENDIX A
TEACHER PRE-TEST / POST-TEST

Name _____

DIRECTIONS:

The purpose of this survey is to collect information regarding your views on fighting behavior as it relates to our school environment. Please respond by writing the appropriate number for each response on the line.

When a fight or a potential fight happens, ask yourself these questions:

KEY: 1= Strongly agree; 2= Agree; 3= Undecided; 4= Disagree;
5= Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5

1. Can you agree on the five areas in the target school that promotes school student confrontations: Kindergarten hallway, cafeteria, cafeteria hallway, physical education walkway, and dismissal in the park.....
2. Do you know how to use the Apology Technique?.....
3. Do you use the ten de-escalation lessons for fighting in your classroom?.....
4. Do you offer alternative solutions to work out problems with your students?.....
5. Before a fight happens, can you pick up the body language of the student?.....
6. Do you teach the correct distance of how to converse with others when a person is upset?.....

63

scale

1 2 3 4 5

7. Do you know how to use the Name Calling Technique?.....
8. Do you know how to use the Escape Technique?.....
9. Do you know how to use the H-A-L-T Principle with your students?.....
10. Do you know how to use the Humor / Exaggeration Technique?.....
11. Do you know how to use the Be Calm Technique?.....
12. Do you know how to use the Impulse Control Technique?.....
13. Do you know how to use the Compromise / Negotiation Technique?.....
14. Do you know how to use the Threat Free Explanation Technique?.....

* Note: The techniques mentioned above will be explained in further detail during the implementation period.

APPENDIX B

Student
Pre-and Post-Test

APPENDIX B
STUDENT PRE-TEST / POST-TEST

Name_____

DIRECTIONS:

The purpose of this survey is to collect information regarding your views on fighting behavior as it relates to our school environment. Please respond by writing the appropriate number for each response on the line. When you see a fight or are involved in one that may happen, ask yourself these questions:

KEY: 1= Strongly agree; 2= Agree; 3= Undecided; 4= Disagree;

5= Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

1. When someone pushes you in line, do you respond by ignoring them?.....
2. When you count to ten before speaking, does it help you to control your feelings?.....
3. When a misunderstanding occurs, do you apologize to the other person without being reminded by the teacher?.....
4. Before you begin to think about fighting, do you consider the other persons feelings?.....
5. Can you read body language from another student?.....
6. Do you fight when others make fun of you?.....

66

scale

1 2 3 4 5

7. Are you able to remain calm when someone threatens you?.....
8. Are you able to compromise or negotiate to get out of a fight?.....
9. Are you able to use humor to get out of a fight before it happens?.....
10. Are you able to give up something for another student, and wait to use it for a later time?.....
11. Can you apologize for bumping accidentally into another student?.....
12. Can you walk away when someone pushes you into a fight?.....
13. Do you try and give the benefit of the doubt to the person who is bothering you?.....
14. Do you try and explain what the person is doing wrong without being upset at them?.....

APPENDIX C

Baseline Data
1993-1994 / 1994-1995

School Year
Fighting Referral Record

APPENDIX C
Target School Fighting Referrals for
School Years: 1993-1994 / 1994-1995

	<u>1993-1994</u>	<u>1994-1995</u>
January(wk.3)	7	7
February	20	6
March	26	10
April(wk.2)	11	2
	—	—
TOTAL	64	25

1993-1994:

Approximately
23 % of the
target population
cannot avoid
a potential fight.

1994-1995:

Approximately
09 % of the
target population
cannot avoid
a potential fight.

APPENDIX D

De-escalate Fighting
Word Search Puzzle

WORD SEARCH

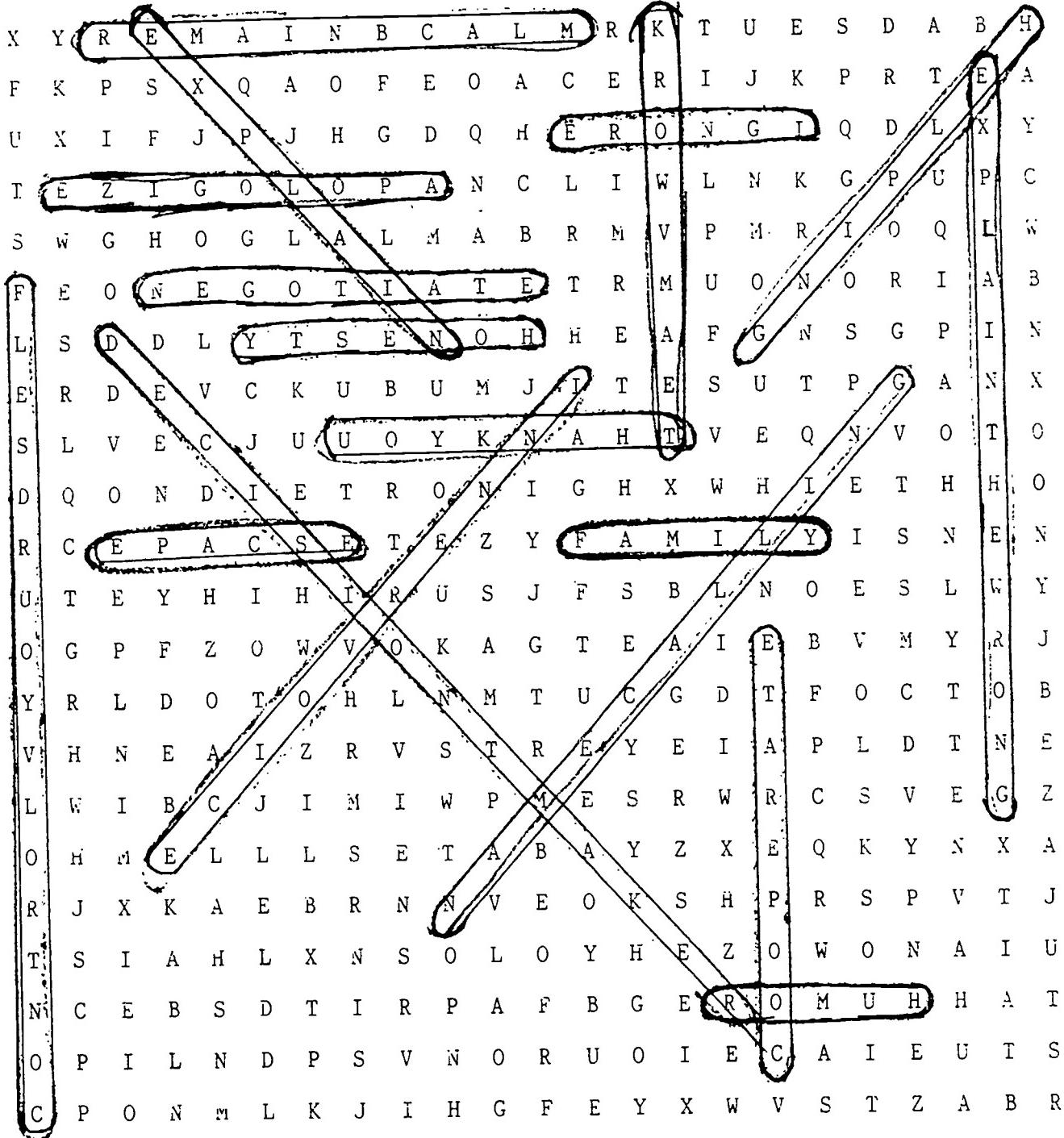
HOW TO DE-ESCALATE A FIGHT

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. PLEASE | 9. HUMOR |
| 2. REMAIN CALM | 10. THANK YOU |
| 3. IGNORE | 11. CONTROL
YOURSELF |
| 4. TEAM WORK | 12. DECISION
MAKER |
| 5. HELPING | 13. ESCAPE |
| 6. APOLOGIZE | 14. EXPLAIN
THE
WRONG |
| 7. HONESTY | 15. NEGOTIATE |
| 8. COOPERATE | 16. NAME
CALLING |
| | 17. INNER
VOICE |

WORD SEARCH

How to De-eslate a fight.

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX E

Teacher Post-test Scores

APPENDIX E
Teacher Post-test Scores

Teacher	Scores		Percent of Increase
	Pre-test	Post-test	
1	60	90	30
2	90	90	0
3	80	80	0
4	70	70	0
5	60	80	20
6	70	90	20
7	80	90	10
8	60	80	20
9	60	90	30

* Teacher # 10 was on a leave of absence, no score was recorded.

APPENDIX E
Student Post-test Scores

APPENDIX F
Student Post-test Scores

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Pre-test Score</u>	<u>Post-test Score</u>
Third	87	45% correct	69% correct
Fourth	92	41% correct	71% correct
<u>Fifth</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>65% correct</u>	<u>50% correct</u>
TOTAL	275	Avg: 50.3% correct	Avg: 63.3% correct

APPENDIX G

Midpoint
Formative Evaluation

MEMORANDUM

Date: 3-7-95

To: All Intermediate grade teachers involved in Mr. Sthair's Practicum

From: Vincent L. Sthair *VLS*

Through: Assistant Principal

RE: Teacher input on the following questions

I need your input at this mid-point juncture of my practicum for the formative evaluation segment of my program. Once again thank you for your consideration. You do not need to sign your name. Please return this paper to my box with the appropriate answers before Friday March 10.

Please answer the below listed questions in detail.

- 1) What aspects of the program do you think has been beneficial or successful?

- 2) What aspects of the program do you think has not been beneficial or successful?

- 3) Please list any suggestions for short-term improvement:

- 4) Please list any suggestions for long-term improvement:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION

APPENDIX H

Parent News Letter /School News Releases

NEWS LETTER

January 23, 1995

Volume #17

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, January 23, 1995
Thursday, January 26, 1995
Friday, January 27, 1995
January 23-27, 1995
Monday, January 30, 1995

Open House - Campus 7:00 P.M.
Last Day of Second Marking Period
No School - Teacher Planning Day
Voter Registration Drive
Begin Third Quarter

OPEN HOUSE CHAPTER 1 PUBLIC MEETING MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 1995

CAMPUS

Parents and students are welcome.
Come see and hear our students read.

ALLIANCE READING CORNER

It is a pleasure teaching the Alliance Reading Program. Our students are eager to read each day and are showing great progress.

Ms. Hirschenson, Teacher - Chapter 1
Campus

I really like the stories because they are funny and sad.

Florence Pett-Jean, 4th Grader

Page 2
January 23, 1995

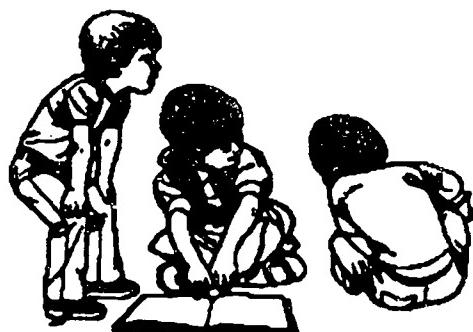
Beginning this week, the target elementary school will begin a twelve week behavior change program to de-escalate fighting for grades three through five. The program is comprised of ten techniques. Each technique will be explained on a weekly basis through the schools' closed circuit television system. The three objective to be accomplished in the program are 1) After the twelve week implementation period, a reduction of fighting referrals will occur by fifty percent. 2) After the twelve week implementation period, eighty percent of the target group will be able to identify the ten techniques used to de-escalate a potential fight. 3) After the twelve week implementation period, eighty percent of the intermediate grade teachers will be able to know how to de-escalate a fighting situation as measured by the teacher made pre-test and post-test.

For the three following weeks, the topics will be the Apologizing, Inner Voice (verbal and non-verbal language), and Name Calling Techniques.

Parents, please ask your child what they have learned regarding how to prevent a potential fight.

TRANSLATION OF NEWSLETTER

If you would like this newsletter translated into Creole, Spanish or Portuguese please call the office at [redacted] and someone will assist you.



NEWS LETTER

February 20, 1995

Volume #22

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, February 21, 1995	PTA Executive Board Meeting, Media Center, 4:30 P.M.
Wednesday, March 1, 1995	DARE Graduation 9:00 AM
Tuesday, March 8, 1995	DARE Graduation 9:00 AM - Campus
Monday, March 13, 1995	PTA Mtg. - 7:00 - Advisory Mtg. 7:30
Wednesday, March 15, 1995	Last Day to Collect Picture Money
Thursday, March 16, 1995	Class Picture Day - Campus
	Class Picture Day

ALLIANCE READING CORNER

The Alliance Program has provided students with strategies to become successful readers.

The Program also empowers teachers with strategies and alternatives for meeting the needs of the students. I am excited about the program.

Jane Sands, Curriculum Facilitator

Beginning on this date the target elementary school will begin three more methods to de-escalate fighting for the grades three through five. 1) The "Escape Technique" is used to remove yourself from the physical environment of a potential fight. 2) The "Be Calm" Technique is used to teach how to ease the tension that one feels when being potentially threatened. 3) The "Compromise and Negotiation" Technique is used to talk yourself out of being threatened to fight. Parents, ask your child to discuss these methods with you at home and if possible demonstrate them.

MULTICULTURAL STORY HOUR AT

During the week of February 13, we began the Multicultural Story Hour. Here's how it works: Once a week a visitor comes on campus to share information and a story from their respective culture. Each week certain classes participate live while all other classes view (on video or closed circuit TV) at scheduled times. All classes have the opportunity to participate live at some point... After watching the story hour, students will have a chance to respond; for example,

NEWS LETTER

March 13, 1995

Volume #24

MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS MONTH - MARCH, 1995
THEATRE IN OUR SCHOOLS MONTH - MARCH, 1995
YOUTH ART MONTH - MARCH, 1995

PTA AND ADVISORY MEETING TONIGHT!!
STARTING AT 7:00 P.M.



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, March 13, 1995

Wednesday, March 15, 1995

Thursday, March 16, 1995

Saturday, March 18, 1995

Saturday, March 25, 1995

Last Day to Collect Picture Money

Class Picture Day

Class Picture Day Campus

PTA Education Showcase, Ft. Lauderdale

High School - 8:30 A.M.

Kindergarten Early Intervention Screening

Campus Cafeteria - 8:00 - 1:00 P.M.

ALLIANCE READING CORNER

This systematic approach provides an atmosphere of security as all students know the procedures. Even the youngest student experiences a confidence boost.

Mary Butler, Kindergarten Teacher

"The homework (take home -done in class) makes me feel smart."

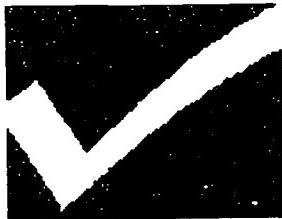
Jimmy Dean, Student
Ms. Butler's Class

Beginning on this date the target elementary school will begin four additional methods to de-escalate fighting for grades three through five. 1) The "Threat Free" Technique is used to demonstrate how to communicate verbally to a student in a non-aggressive way. 2) The "Humor or Exaggeration" Technique is used to de-escalate a potential fight though the means of demonstrating humor to ease the threat of aggression. 3) The "Decision Time" Technique is used to illustrate how to analyze potential fighting situations and what choice to make. 4) The "Impulse Control" Technique is used as the final method in the behavior change program series to de-escalate fighting by exhibiting delayed gratification to postpone desires for attainment at a later time.

The results of the behavior change program to de-escalate fighting will be published in a future newsletter. Thank you parents and teachers for all your support, Coach Sthair.

APPENDIX I

Target Group Teachers
In Service Agendas



BEHAVIOR CHANGE WORKSHOP: DE-ESCALATE FIGHTING

1/23/95
2:15 PM to 2:45 PM
MEDIA CENTER

Type of meeting:
**INFORMATION ON
INTERMEDIATE GRADE
PRACTICUM**

Facilitator:

VINCENT STAIR

MEETING CALLED BY: MRS. VILLAREALE

----- Agenda Topics -----

1. WELCOME
2. INTRODUCTION / PURPOSE
3. OBJECTIVES
4. ROLE OF TEACHERS
5. ROLE OF STUDENTS
6. ROLE OF IMPLEMENTOR
7. SCOPE OF PRACTICUM
8. SEQUENCE OF PRACTICUM
9. THANK YOU
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.

Other information

Special notes:



BEHAVIOR CHANGE WORKSHOP: DE-ESCALATE FIGHTING: THREE TECHNIQUES TO STOP POTENTIAL FIGHTING

**01/30/95
2:15 to 2:45
MEDIA CENTER**

Meeting called by: Vincent Sthair

----- Agenda Topics -----

1. Welcome
2. Introduction / Purpose
3. Apology Technique
4. Inner Voice Technique
5. Name Calling Technique
6. Question / Answer
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Other information

Special notes: Please encourage your students think to about these techniques as you see the needs existing in particular situations.

Agenda

BEHAVIOR CHANGE WORKSHOP: DE- ESCALATE FIGHTING: THREE NEW TECHNIQUES

2/21/95

**2:15 PM to 4:25 PM
MEDIA CENTER**

Type of meeting:
TEACHER INSERVICE

Facilitator: **VINCENT
STHAIR**

Agenda topics

WELCOME

INTRODUCTION / PURPOSE

OBJECTIVES

REVIEW THE PAST THREE WEEKS

CURRENT TECHNIQUES :

ESCAPE TECHNIQUE

BE CALM TECHNIQUE

COMPROMISE / NEGOTIATION TECHNIQUE

QUESTION / ANSWERS

NEXT MEETING: MARCH 13,1995.

Special notes:



BEHAVIOR CHANGE WORKSHOP: DE-ESCALATE FIGHTING: THREE TECHNIQUES TO STOP POTENTIAL FIGHTING

03/01/95
2:15-2:45
MEDIA CENTER

Meeting called by: Vincent Sthair
Type of meeting: Practicum update

----- Agenda Topics -----

1. Past learned methods
2. Next three methods
3. Points to consider:
4. A) Anger Continum
5. B) Restricted spaces
6. C) High traffic areas to inform students
7. New Business:
8. A) Teacher suggestions on improvement of
practicum behavior change
9. B) Have you seen any differences since the
program has been implemented
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

Other information

ANGER CONTINUUM

ANNOYED

FRUSTRATED

ANGRY

INFURIATED

HOSTILE

ENRAGED

VIOLENT

SELF-CONTROLLED

/

OUT OF CONTROL

AREAS TO WATCH OUT FOR POTENTIAL FIGHTING:

CLOSE QUARTER TRAFFIC PATTERN AREAS:

HALLWAYS

KINDERGARTEN INTERSECTION

CAFETERIA (INSIDE / OUTSIDE)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (SIDEWALK)

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL IN PARK



BEHAVIOR CHANGE WORKSHOP: DE-ESCALATE FIGHTING: THREE TECHNIQUES TO STOP POTENTIAL FIGHTING (WEEK 8)

**03/13/95
2:15-2:45
MEDIA CENTER**

Meeting called by: Vincent Sthair
Type of meeting: Practicum update

----- Agenda Topics -----

OLD BUSINESS

1. REVIEWED PAST TECHNIQUES
2. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
3. IMPROVEMENTS NECESSARY
4. REVIEW THE MID-POINT FORMATIVE EVALUATION
- 5.
6. NEW BUSINESS
7. THREAT- FREE EXPLANATION
8. HUMOR / EXAGGERATION TECHNIQUE
9. DECISION TIME TECHNIQUE

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Other information



BEHAVIOR CHANGE WORKSHOP: (WEEK 11)

DE-ESCALATE FIGHTING: THE CONCLUDING TECHNIQUE TO STOP POTENTIAL FIGHTING

04/03/95
2:15-2:45
MEDIA CENTER

Meeting called by: Vincent Sthair

Type of meeting: Practicum update

----- Agenda Topics -----

OLD BUSINESS

1. REVIEWED PAST TECHNIQUES
2. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
- 3.
4. NEW BUSINESS
5. IMPULSE CONTROL TECHNIQUE
6. APRIL 10 POST-TEST DISTRIBUTION TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS
7. TENTATIVE DATE WILL BE SCHEDULED FOR FACULTY MEETING REGARDING PRACTICUM
- 8.
9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Other information

APPENDIX J

A BEHAVIOR CHANGE PROGRAM TO DE-ESCALATE FIGHTING IN
INTERMEDIATE GRADES OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Video